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31. (As filed) The computer system of claim 26 wherein the plurality of fields includes a plurality of comment fields.

32. (As filed) The computer system of claim 26 wherein the plurality of partitions includes a plurality of forms for inputting and viewing data.

33. (As filed) The computer system of claim 32 wherein the plurality of forms include at least one of an evaluation form, a regulatory form, a reliability form, a design review form, a manufacturability form, a documentation form, a system test form, a mechanical form, a bench test form and a report form.

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34. (New) The method of claim 17, further comprising limiting access of said at least one outside vendor to at least a portion of said database.

35. (New) The method of claim 17, further comprising providing a plurality of security levels to limit access to said database.

36. (New) The method of claim 17, wherein said at least one vendor provides technical documentation to said database.

### REMARKS

Claims 1-33 are pending in the application. Claims 1-33 have been rejected. Claims 1, 3, and 6 are amended. Claims 34-36 are added.

#### **A. Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)**

The Office Action rejected claims 1-33 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,822,207 ("Hazama"). Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection.

Regarding independent claim 1, the Office Action states that Hazama "does not explicitly indicate the step of sharing the database among a plurality of relevant parties; and inputting data into the database by at least one of the relevant parties during a development stage of the manufactured component." Office Action, p. 3. However, the Office Action states that "it would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art at the time the

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invention was made to modify the teachings of Hazama” to provide for these steps. Office Action, p. 4.

Applicant respectfully disagrees with this conclusion of the Office Action. There is no suggestion or motivation in Hazama to modify its teachings to provide a method in which a database is shared “among a plurality of relevant parties, at least one of the relevant parties comprising an outside vendor” as recited by claim 1. Nor is there any such motivation to modify Hazama to provide for “inputting data into the database by at least one of the relevant parties during a development stage of the manufactured component” as recited by claim 1. Further, it is respectfully submitted that the portion of Hazama relied upon by the Office Action as implicit support for this limitation, col. 7, lines 7-13, nowhere teaches or supports the limitation. That is, developing a “bending plan based on the plurality of expert modules,” does not teach or suggest “inputting data into the database by at least one of the relevant parties during a development stage of the manufactured component.” For at least these reasons, Applicant respectfully submits that claim 1 is patentably distinguished over Hazama and Applicant respectfully requests the Examiner to remove the rejection of claim 1 and claims 2-8 depending therefrom.

Further, it appears that the rejection of claim 1 and claims 2-8 depending therefrom, as well as claims 9-33, is based on an improper hindsight-based obviousness analysis. In this regard, it must be recognized that hindsight reconstruction of claims based on disparate aspects of the prior art may not be employed as a valid basis for the rejection of those claims. *W.L. Gore & Associates, Inc. v. Garlock, Inc.*, 220 USPQ 303, 312-313 (Fed. Cir. 1983); *Panduit Corp. v. Dennison Manufacturing Co.*, 1 USPQ2d 1593, 1595-1596 (Fed. Cir. 1987). Furthermore, an obviousness determination requires that the invention *as a whole* would have been obvious to a person having ordinary skill in the art. *Connell v. Sears Roebuck & Co.*, 220 USPQ 193 (Fed. Cir. 1983).

To establish obviousness based on a combination of elements disclosed in the prior art or a modification of the prior art, there must be some motivation, suggestion or teaching of the desirability of making the claimed invention. *See In re Dance*, 48 USPQ2d 1635, 1637

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(Fed. Cir. 1998); *In re Gordon*, 221 USPQ 1125, 1127 (Fed. Cir. 1984). The motivation, suggestion or teaching to modify references may come explicitly from statements in the prior art, the knowledge of one of ordinary skill in the art, or, in some cases, the nature of the problem to be solved. *In re Dembiczak*, 50 USPQ2d 1614, 1617 (Fed. Cir. 1999). Whether the Office Action relies on an express or implicit showing of a motivation or suggestion to modify or combine references, it must provide particular findings related thereto. *In re Dembiczak*, 50 USPQ2d at 1617. Broad conclusory statements standing alone are not "evidence." *Id.* Thus, the Office Action must include particular *factual findings* that support an assertion that a skilled artisan would have modified the express disclosure of Hazama to develop the invention recited by independent claims 1, 9, 17, and 26. *See In re Kotzab*, 55 USPQ2d 1313, 1317. Applicant is unable to discern the requisite factual basis in Hazama or the Office Action.

In this regard, the Office Action appears to have engaged in a hindsight-based obviousness analysis condemned by the Federal Circuit. In order to prevent a hindsight-based obviousness analysis, the Federal Circuit has clearly established that the relevant inquiry for determining the scope and content of the prior art is whether there is a reason, suggestion, or motivation in the prior art or elsewhere that would have led one of ordinary skill in the art to combine or modify references. *See Ruiz v. A.B. Chance Co.*, 57 USPQ2d 1161, 1167 (Fed. Cir. 2000); *see also In Re Rouffet*, 47 USPQ2d 1453, 1459 (Fed. Cir. 1998) ("[T]he Board must identify specifically ... the reasons one of ordinary skill in the art would have been motivated to select the references and combine them to render the claimed invention obvious."). Applicant can detect, and the Office Action has pointed to, no motivation or suggestion that would prompt someone of ordinary in the art to look to Hazama for a solution to the problem addressed by Applicant's invention. Such a determination that there is a suggestion or motivation to modify Hazama is a factual finding that is prerequisite to an ultimate conclusion of obviousness. *Sibia Neurosciences, Inc. v. Cadus Pharma. Corp.*, 55 USPQ2d 1927, 1931 (Fed. Cir. 2000). Applicant respectfully submits that the Office Action is devoid of such a finding.

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Without such a finding, a *prima facie* case of obviousness in rejecting claim 1, dependent claims 2-8, and the additional pending claims 9-33 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) based on Hazama has not been made. For this further reason, Applicant respectfully submits that claim 1 is patentably distinguished over Hazama and Applicant respectfully requests the Examiner to remove the rejection of claim 1 and claims 2-8 depending therefrom.

With regard to claim 2, Applicant respectfully disagrees that "Hazama substantially teaches a method as claimed wherein the database holds data related to procurement of a plurality of components for a computer system . . ." Office Action, p. 4. Instead, Hazama is directed to a manufacturing system for a sheet metal bending facility. *See Hazama*, col. 1, lines 50-60. Nowhere does Hazama teach or suggest any motivation to modify its system for providing a database "related to procurement of a plurality of components for a computer system" as recited by claim 2. For this further reason, claim 2 is patentable over Hazama.

With respect to claim 3, Applicant respectfully disagrees that "Hazama substantially teaches a method as claimed further comprises step [sic] of providing a pointer in the database, the pointer locating data related to at least one of the development stages . . ." Office Action, p. 4. The portion of Hazama relied upon by the Office Action relates to locating data in a database of *previous* sheet metal bending jobs. Hazama, col. 12-13, lines 63-1. As such, these previous jobs do not relate to "at least one of the development stages of the manufactured component" as recited by claim 3. For this further reason, claim 3 patentably distinguishes over Hazama.

Regarding claim 5, Applicant respectfully disagrees that Hazama substantially teaches a method in which data includes testing information or regulatory information, as stated by the Office Action at page 5. With respect to testing information, there is no teaching or suggestion in Hazama that during a testing stage of a sheet metal bending sequence, any data related thereto is input into a database. *See Hazama*, col. 2, lines 52-62. Furthermore, there is no suggestion or motivation to modify Hazama to provide for the input of data relating to regulatory information, also recited by claim 5. Instead, the portion of Hazama relied upon by the Office Action relates to information regarding a previous job, which the Office Action

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states “is readable as regulatory information.” Office Action, p. 5. In contrast, the regulatory information recited by claim 5 relates to regulatory requirements, such as safety information. *See, e.g.*, Applicant’s Specification, p. 2, lines 11 and 12 and Figs. 10A and 10B. For these further reasons, claim 5 is allowable over Hazama.

Regarding claim 6, Applicant respectfully disagrees that Hazama teaches or suggests a method “wherein the database is accessible to a manufacturer and at least one outside vendor ....” Office Action, p. 6. Instead, the portion of Hazama referred to in the Office Action relates to a communication network 26 within a single factory in which various modules are connected to network 26 via a network interface card 42. Hazama discloses that “the network interface card 42 may be vendor specific and be selected based on the type of communications network that is selected.” Hazama, col. 15, lines 48-50. Nowhere, however, does Hazama teach or suggest that such a communications network, which is disclosed in Hazama as being contained solely within a single manufacturing facility, be adapted so that a “database is accessible to a manufacturer and at least one outside vendor” as recited by claim 6. For at least this further reason, claim 6 is patentably distinguished over Hazama.

Further, nowhere does the Office Action state that Hazama teaches or suggests the additional claim 6 element of “a plurality of fields within each partition, the plurality of fields for logging information related to a plurality of manufacturing development stages.” Applicant respectfully submits that nowhere does Hazama teach or suggest such an additional part of a database. For this further reason, claim 6 is patentable over Hazama.

Independent claim 9 is also patentably distinguishable over Hazama for the reasons discussed above with respect to claim 6. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests the Examiner to remove the rejection of claim 9 and claims 10-16 depending therefrom.

With respect to claim 12, Applicant respectfully disagrees that “Hazama substantially teaches a method as claimed wherein the database is capable of activating a plurality of programs for viewing and editing the data, the plurality of programs enabling the manufacturer and at least one outside vendor to view and edit identical data . . .” Office Action, p. 8. First, nowhere in the cited portion of Hazama, col. 15, lines 45-50, is there a

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teaching or suggestion that a database itself is capable of activating a plurality of programs, as recited by claim 12. Further, nowhere in the cited portion of Hazama or elsewhere, as discussed above, is there any teaching or suggestion to enable a manufacturer and at least one outside vendor to view and edit identical data. For these further reasons, claim 12 is patentable over Hazama.

With respect to claim 16, Applicant respectfully disagrees that "Hazama substantially teaches a method as claimed wherein the plurality of forms include at least one of an evaluation form, a regulatory form, a reliability form, a design review form, manufacturability form, a documentation form, a system test form, a mechanic form, a bench test form, and a report form . . . ." Office Action, pp. 9-10. Instead, the portion of Hazama referred to in the Office Action relates to recent developments in the production process of sheet metal components. *See* Hazama, col. 3, lines 41-54. Nowhere does Hazama teach or suggest desirability of the database forms recited in claim 16. For this further reason, claim 16 patentably distinguishes over Hazama.

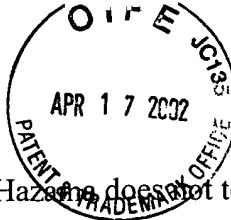
As to claim 17, the discussion above as to claim 9 applies equally to claim 17. Furthermore, as discussed above with respect to claim 2, nowhere does Hazama teach or suggest use of a method in connection with the "procuring of a computer component" as recited by claim 17. Thus, for the reasons above with regard to claim 9 and this further reason, claim 17 patentably distinguishes over Hazama and Applicant respectfully requests the Examiner to remove the rejection of claim 17 and claims 18-24 depending therefrom.

With respect to claim 20, Applicant respectfully submits that claim 20 is patentable for the same reason discussed above with respect to claims 6 and 12, in that nowhere does Hazama teach or suggest a method in which a manufacturer and at least one outside vendor may view and edit identical data. Thus, for this further reason, claim 20 patentably distinguishes over Hazama.

With regard to claim 24, for the same reasons discussed above with respect to claim 16, claim 24 patentably distinguishes over Hazama.

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With respect to claim 25, because Hazama does not teach or suggest "inputting data related to test results" as discussed above with respect to claim 5, claim 25 patentably distinguishes over Hazama for this further reason.

With regard to independent claim 26, for the same reasons as discussed above with respect to claim 9, claim 26 patentably distinguishes over Hazama and Applicant respectfully requests the Examiner to remove the rejection as to independent claim 26 and claims 27-33 depending therefrom.

With regard to claims 29 and 33, for the same reasons discussed above as to claim 12 (respecting claim 29) and claim 16 (respecting claim 33), these claims patentably distinguish over Hazama.

In light of the foregoing amendment and remarks, Applicant respectfully submits that pending claims 1-33 and new claims 34-36 are non-obvious in light of Hazama. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests the Examiner to remove the rejection of claims 1-33 and allow all claims 1-36.

### CONCLUSION

Attached hereto is Attachment A which is a marked-up version of the changes made to the specification and/ or claims by the current amendment. The attached page is captioned "Version With Markings To Show Changes Made."

Applicant respectfully requests that a timely Notice of Allowance be issued in this case. Nonetheless, should any issues remain that might be subject to resolution through a telephonic interview, the Examiner is requested to telephone the undersigned.

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Respectfully submitted,

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## **EXHIBIT A**

### **Version With Markings to Show Changes Made**

1. (Amended) A method for procuring a manufactured component through a plurality of development stages, the method comprising:
  - providing a database for storing information related to procuring the manufactured component;
  - sharing the database among a plurality of relevant parties, at least one of the relevant parties comprising an outside vendor;
  - inputting data into the database by at least one of the relevant parties during a development stage of the manufactured component; and
  - modifying the database at each development stage of the manufactured component if necessary.
3. (Amended) The method of claim 1 further comprising:
  - providing a pointer in the database, the pointer locating data related to at least one of the development stages of the manufactured component.
6. (Amended) The method of claim 1 wherein the database is stored on a memory and includes:
  - a plurality of partitions, each partition relating to manufacturing the component;
  - a plurality of fields within each partition, the plurality of fields for logging information related to a plurality of manufacturing development stages; and
  - a plurality of storage locations for storing data related to the plurality of partitions; wherein the database is accessible to a manufacturer and [at least one] said outside vendor.
34. (New) The method of claim 17, further comprising limiting access of said at least one outside vendor to at least a portion of said database.
35. (New) The method of claim 17, further comprising providing a plurality of security levels to limit access to said database.



36.\_\_\_\_(New) The method of claim 17, wherein said at least one vendor provides technical documentation to said database.

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